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# The Universalism of the Lord's Prayer

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# THE UNIVERSALISM

OF

# THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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THE

# UNIVERSALISM

OF

# THE LORD'S PRAYER.

*WORDS TO ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,*
*AND TO ALL MANKIND.*

BY

REV. JOHN G. ADAMS, D.D.

"Whatever else Protestants and Catholics, or different denominations of Protestants, cannot say together, this Prayer they can say. Here they all agree, think alike, believe alike, feel and talk alike."—*Rev. W. H. Cudworth.*

"The Lord's Prayer is the Universalist profession of faith. It includes all the essential doctrines of Christianity, and all the duties of the Christian life."—*Rev. J. W. Hanson, D.D.*

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# PREFACE.

THE title of this book is new; the Prayer of which it speaks is not. It comes to us from the great Teacher of the ages and of the race. The Christian churches of the past have accepted it, and the churches of the present of all sects claim it as the Model Prayer. Like other utterances of Christ, it cannot be too carefully considered or too profoundly studied. In the present instance, the call is made on all readers interested in Christianity to consider this great subject, that of THE UNIVERSALISM OF THE PRAYER. The reader is asked to regard not so much the fact that the title of the book is new, as that other question of vastly more importance, Is the statement of the title true?

J. G. A.

MELROSE HIGHLANDS, MASS.,
October 1, 1879.

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# The Lord's Prayer.

MATT. VI. 9–15.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

## "Our Father who art in Heaven."

*FATHER in Heaven! how many hearts are breathing*
*That hallowed name, with reverent lips, to-night,*
*On southern plains, where graceful vines are wreathing,*
*Or on some snow-clad towering Alpine height!*
*The lonely dweller on the rugged mountain,*
*The mariner upon the trackless sea,*
*The peasant maiden by the wildwood fountain,*
*And childhood, lisping at its mother's knee, —*
*All breathe alike the beautiful petition*
*To Thee, "Our Father who in heaven art;"*
*And Thou dost own, most blessed recognition!*
*The tie between Thee and each human heart.*
THY CHILDREN! *may we ever strive to be*
*Worthy, Our Father, of that name and Thee!*

MRS. C. A. JERAULD.

# THE UNIVERSALISM OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

## SECTION I.

### GOD OUR FATHER.

*"Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name."*

WHAT do I mean when I speak of the Universalism of the Lord's Prayer? Something more, let me say, than its adaptableness as a form of prayer to man universally. So much is admitted by all Christians. But all do not admit what we understand by the Universalism of the Lord's Prayer. We mean by this affirmation, the principles upon which the prayer is based, the essential truths which it involves, viz.: the Divine Paternity; the perfection of the Divine Law, and the righteousness of the Divine Administration; the allegiance which all souls owe to it, and the assurance that, by the divine power and in accordance with divine love, all

souls will become the obedient subjects of this administration, and God be glorified in the undivided homage of all his intelligent creation. This, in brief, is what we understand by the Universalism of the Lord's Prayer.

Let us proceed to substantiate these affirmations by such considerations as shall seem to us consistent with reason and the revealed will of God in his Word.

The opening of the prayer is a recognition of the Divine Paternity; "Our Father who art in Heaven." The Father of all men, the one to whom all men may look as to a common parent. Father implies children. The common Brotherhood of Man is here recognized. Although the word Father is sometimes applied to Jehovah in the Old Testament, and was given to Zeus by the Greeks and to Jupiter by the Romans, yet the New Testament idea of the Divine Fatherhood is more significant than in these other instances. The sense in which the Heathen and the Jews call the Supreme Being "Father of gods and men" is different from the Christian meaning of the term, in this, that they meant by it rather the Creator of man than his present guardian and friend. When Jesus uses the expression, "Our Father who art in Heaven," he signifies

the common Parent of mankind, in whose image or spiritual likeness all men are created, and who loves all his children with an unchangeable love. The apostle has the same conviction when he says, "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him."[1]

It is a paternal love which God bears towards his children. This is evinced

1. In the creation of man. We must ascribe a motive to God in giving being to his offspring. It could have been no other than a benevolent one. For, as the Book of Wisdom affirms, "Never would he have made any thing if he had hated it."[2] To ascribe to him, as the Calvinistic theology does, the design of bringing children into existence that they might of his own predetermination be made eternal losers by their being, is to demean his character for ever in the sight of all good and loving beings; or to suppose him a Deity having no fixed purpose respecting man when he created him, but who cast him upon the earthly life-course to take his chance of being made happy or miserable for ever because of a power of choice which he had given him, is to make no improvement on the Divine character. In both cases, there is a lack

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 6. [2] Wisdom xi. 24.

of good-will, of paternal affection, on the part of the Creator. We may shut our eyes upon all this, and call it mystery; but the only mystery in the case is, that men should ever so have abused their reason as to suffer themselves to listen with allowance to such aspersions cast upon the wise and gracious God of all.

No: in reference to his creative work we are told that "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good;"[1] by which we understand that, taken as a whole, these works answered his wise and beneficent designs. Such designs must he have had when he called man into being, made him a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the other works of his hands. It is in the light of this creative goodness that we are directed in the offering of this prayer to say "Our Father, who art in heaven."

2. In his providences, having in view the welfare of his children, God manifests his gracious Fatherhood. There are many earthly parents who love their children, but are unable to provide for all their wants. They cannot manifest their love as they would in their gifts to them. With our heavenly Father there is no such failure

[1] Gen. i. 31.

of the means to bless his offspring. He has fitted up this earthly dwelling-place for them, and has supplied them with the means of bodily subsistence. "He maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust." "Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."[1] This is the rule, as his creatures are led to perceive it, as said the Psalmist, "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season."[2] "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."[3] We accept these truths. We almost instinctively trust in this general and constant providence which meets and answers these temporal wants of man. It is in this trust that man goes forth to his daily employments, and returns to his rest "when the weary day is done;" that he meets the changes and adversities of his earthly course, hoping for deliverance from evils which may beset him, and somehow presuming that he who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the flowers of the field, will not overlook the needs of his children who are so constantly and completely dependent upon him.

Has our heavenly Father the same interest in

[1] Matt. v. 45; Ps. cxlv. 16. [2] Ps. cxlv. 15. [3] Ps. cxlv. 9.

the spiritual that he has in the temporal wants of his children? Can there be any reasonable doubt of this? Can the all-wise and all-gracious contradict himself? Is he not in one mind, and has he not in all his works the perfection of consistency? Inasmuch as the spiritual is greater than the temporal, God has made provision accordingly. He knew in the beginning that man could not live on temporal supplies alone; that he had powers outliving all earthliness, and which nothing of the material could satisfy. These powers are such as the inbreathings of creative intelligence conferred upon him, such as the Divine Spirit awakened in him, never to die. Are these powers recognized in the providential dealings of God with his offspring? Assuredly. In the beginning it was so, as we read the history of man. No sooner did he become a transgressor than helping grace appeared for him. "Exceeding great and precious promises" in his behalf were spoken; promises repeated through patriarch and prophet until He who was foretold as the world's Light appears as the assurance of their fulfilment; promises of the enlightenment of the world by the truth of heaven, and its salvation through the obedience of his children to the heavenly law; promises assuring us that "all

the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations come up before him and worship him, and glorify his name;" that "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."[1] It is the same love that moved our heavenly Father to confer existence upon his children, and to supply their temporal wants after he had placed them upon the earth, that induced him to provide for their spiritual needs by means which his own paternal wisdom devised. "God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[2] Thus true to himself, and to all the interests of his children, is God in his providential bestowments; and thus are we encouraged in view of them to take with confidence that address to him upon our lips when

[1] Rom. v. 21. [2] John III. 16, 17; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.

we seek him in prayer, — "our Father which art in heaven."

3. God manifests his Fatherhood also in the moral government of his children. He has instituted wise and wholesome laws for their observance. In obedience to these laws they realize enjoyment and happiness; in the infraction of them, unrest and affliction. In this we see his justice and mercy, not in contradiction as certain theologians have made them, but harmonious. His love is not a weakness, his benevolence is not that which would spoil his children by over-indulgence, or fail to correct them in their transgressions. "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his works."[1] He is "a just God and a Saviour."[2]

A wise and provident earthly parent would have some useful or healthy employment for his children. To encourage them in idleness would be to induce indolence, wastefulness, want, ruin. And he would seek to inspire them with a love of duty. He would have them satisfied and happy in their employment. If it might not in every aspect seem agreeable, if it should sometimes tax all their powers, or seem less promising

[1] Ps. lxii. 12. [2] Isa. xlv. 21.

of immediate results than they could desire, he would not for this have them abjure the work itself. He would have them see that the laborious is the profitable, the idle the unprofitable course.

So has our heavenly Parent ordained for his children. He demands work of us. He asks obedience to his laws; requires that we should glorify him in body and spirit by using both to our good and to the blessing of our race. No arbitrary enactments are in his holy code, no austere exactions. Though a sovereign, he has, in their very service to him, the good of his children in view. Duty is life. It is not a call to obedience with an impending rod; is not a threat to induce the subject to submit in "the terrors of a slave;" nor a bribe held out to quicken a reluctant soul to compliance. It is an invitation to the service of truth, to the discipline its work will afford, to the spiritual strength it will impart, to the heaven of wakeful trust and joy and peace into which it will induct the soul. In no other way could the merciful Father so well have signified his paternal interest in his offspring, as in assigning them a life-study of self-culture in the spirit of his truth and love, in pure adoration of his nature, in active good with each other.

Truly have these New Testament words defined it all: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."[1]

Very different is this from that theology which instructs us that, without the threatenings of endless woe and the promise of an endless heaven hereafter as an inducement to present duty, it is impracticable to effect the work of true repentance and righteousness with man. The church has been troubled with this error long enough. It has worked more evil than good. It now so dims the moral perceptions of many as to lead them to regard this New Testament doctrine of obedience for its own sake as shallow sentimentalism or a dangerous heresy. As though the pure and blessed God of all, who desires "truth in the inward parts" and cannot look upon hypocrisy with the least allowance, could be satisfied with any such homage given him by his children; homage not from a love of his character or service, but through fear of extraneous punishment or hope of extraneous reward! Thanks that this once popular error is fast going into decline, and that higher conceptions of the divine requirements of man and the incentives to obey

[1] 1 John v. 3.

them are gaining ground in the churches. They must be still more ere these churches can lead men to love their Father as he deserves to be loved, with all the heart and soul and mind and strength.

4. Again: the paternal love of God is manifest in the promises of the Gospel as to the final destiny of mankind.

We can most truly discern the disposition of God towards his children by regarding the end of their creation, as he has made it known. What is seen to be the ultimate result of his government with man? Is this, his creature, made for a final good for which his nature seems capable, or are his powers to be perverted everlastingly in the service of sin? Will our heavenly Parent in the course of his administration do the worst or the best that can be done with his offspring, man?

We speak now of his mere power, of what he might be able to do. Jesus told his disciples on one occasion to fear him who was able "to destroy both soul (or life) and body in hell," to make an utter extinction of being; to fear him rather than that earthly power which, after it had killed the body, had no more that it could do; to fear him who had all power to create or to

destroy, to kill or to make alive. He said this just as John the Baptist had said that "God was able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham."[1] He who made can annihilate. But has any such intention, on God's part, respecting his children been announced? Are we not instructed to hope for the best from his dealings with them? If he is able to destroy, is he not able to save also, — "to save to the uttermost"? If able to annihilate his offspring, is he not able to insure their resurrection from the death of unbelief and sin? Surely, if we reason in the light of the New Testament; "according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."[2]

But power is not the only attribute we are to consider. What saith God's love? This, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."[3] A redemption from evil is the intent of this action. And the Redeemer of man has appeared. His work is thus defined: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all

[1] Matt. iii. 9. [2] Phil. iii. 21. [3] 1 John iv. 10.

rule and authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."[1]

Here, as we see, is the ultimate good, the final victory. This ruin into which men have fallen, whatever else it be, is not irretrievable; is not a labyrinth with no outlet, a night without a morning. Evil is only a transient eclipse of this moral creation. The ample sunshine shall appear. So hope we for the living, so join we in the solemn chant for the dead: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . Then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory. . . . Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."[2]

> "God is love;
> He yet shall wipe away creation's tears,
> And all the world shall summer in his smile."

With these views of the divine benignity, of the changeless love of our heavenly Father to all

[1] Matt. xviii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 53–57.

his children, we perceive the propriety of this last expression of this first section of the Lord's Prayer, — "Hallowed be thy name."

We understand by God's name, as here used, his character, of which the name is significant. Such a Father deserves the profound reverence of his children, their cheerful homage, their constant service. He is ever worthy of it. His children cannot have too high a conception of his attributes. They are most likely to fail in their just apprehensions of him. They have thus failed, and are afflicted with this failure now. They have too often made of the Deity such a being as themselves, have too often bowed down to gods

> "partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust."

Believing in and serving such gods, they have become imitators of them in their conduct towards each other; have lived in envy, hatred, wrath; have been destroyers and not saviors of their fellow-men; have rendered by their perverseness the earth a hell of contention and woe rather than a heaven of love and happiness. Even our Christianity has been defiled with these unhallowed conceptions of the merciful Father of all.

It should not be thus. We should be ashamed and confounded in ascribing to the loving Father passions and actions such as would disgrace humanity. Yet his children have done this, and human society is suffering now from the effects of this grievous error. The old question of the Bible, as asked by the Almighty of his chosen people, is one which all Christendom should heed at the present hour, — "If I be a Father, where is my honor?"[1] What blindness can be comparable with that which would "change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man"?[2] This has been done by God's children. They have thus brought dishonor upon his pure and adorable name; have separated themselves from the light and enjoyment of his paternal countenance; have become dwellers in darkness instead of "children of the light and of the day."

One of the most absurd of all errors in the Christian Church has been that which affirms that the sinfulness of man destroys the paternal relation of God to him. What does such pretension mean? Sin destroy the relationship! Let us ask, does virtue constitute the relationship? Surely not. The act of creation makes

[1] Mal. i. 6. [2] Rom. i. 23.

that. The child is related to the father before either obedience or disobedience exists. As, then, obedience does not constitute the relationship, it is absurd to say that disobedience can destroy it.

We may be the children of the devil, or adversary, as Jesus declared the Jews to be, by our wicked dispositions and works, or we may be the children of God in an especial sense, by imbibing his spirit, and following him, — as the apostle directs, "Be ye followers of God as dear children;"[1] but still God is our Father before that, and it is with reference to this relationship that he will be honored by our conduct towards him, and by his dealings with us.

And being thus the Father of man, his name and character should be vindicated and honored accordingly. These have been aspersed long enough. The theologies of men have kept this evil in being. They need exposure, correction, reproof, and they who hold them instruction in righteousness. One of the chief needs of the Christian church at this moment is, the true vindication of the Christian doctrine of the Fatherhood of God.

Hallowed be the name of our Father in heaven;

[1] Eph. v. 1.

hallowed in all our conceptions of his character, and of his wise and gracious dealings with his children; hallowed in our thoughts, when we would seek him in praise and prayer; hallowed in our meditations, when we contemplate his works or would be newly enlightened by his word. Hallowed in our speech should the name of our Father be.

Under the olden dispensation the command was given, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."[1] Sacred to the Jews was that one name by which the God of all was known. And even now in the worship of the Jew, the name Adoni, signifying Lord, is uttered instead of that ineffable name Jehovah. This may be an extreme in the service of the Israelite; for God's name may be spoken in reverence even as the name of a dear and loved earthly Father may be. But the unhallowed and profane use of this adorable name is for ever condemned in the light of reason and revelation. The profanity which so largely abounds in Christian lands, wherein the name of the Holiest is connected with the vilest speech of which the human tongue is capable, is one of the most fearful and deadly evils with which human society is dis-

[1] Ex. xx. 7.

graced and corrupted. There can be no apology for it but thoughtlessness or want of sense; and thoughtlessness is surely a most impotent pretence in its justification. If strictest circumspection ever should be exercised, it is when our speech has reference to the name which all God's earthly children should delight to honor, and which, as in the heavenly vision of the Revelator, is recognized by the heavenly hosts in the ascription, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"[1] If the false theology of Christendom has in any measure led to this connection of the name of the Deity with curses and imprecations, it is time that all such theology was put away. We can never have a high order of civilization while the vice of profanity is interwoven, as it is now, with the habits of human society. "Because of swearing the land mourneth,"[2] now as it did anciently. Reverence for God's name in the hearts of the people is the only radical cure for the abomination.

The reverential universalism of the New Testament forbids the taking of God's name in vain; forbids all irreverence, all profanity, all evil imprecations. It was the statement of a somewhat humorous opponent of our holy faith, years ago,

[1] Rev. iv. 8. [2] Jer. xxiii. 10.

that Universalists had no oaths of their own, but were obliged to borrow them of other sects; since "God bless you!" would better represent the spirit of their faith than "God curse you!" What a compliment to the faith, and what a reproof of that other faith that could furnish the expressions which the tongue of profanity would seek to employ! Let us thankfully remember the significant concession. Our faith admits of no profanity. It would hallow the name of the Father of all: it would "bless and curse not."

Such, then, is the truth of the Divine Paternity expressed in these opening words of that prayer of Jesus which he has left for the use and blessing of mankind.

"Like a cradle, rocking, rocking,
  Silent, peaceful, to and fro;
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping
  On a little face below,—
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,
  Jarless, noiseless, safe, and slow;
Falls the light of God's face bending
  Down and watching us below.

"And as feeble babes that suffer,
  Toss and cry and will not rest,
Are the ones the tender mother
  Holds the closest, loves the best;

So when we are weak and wretched,
By our sins weighed down, distressed,
Then it is that God's great patience
Holds us closest, loves us best."

Be his name vindicated, honored, and san
fied by us continually!

## THE ETERNAL FATHER.

Oh how I fear thee, living God!
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears.

Yet I may love thee too, O Lord!
Almighty as thou art,
For thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.

Oh then this weak but trusting heart.
In pity deign to take,
And make it love thee for thyself
And for thy glory's sake.

No earthly father loves like thee,
No mother half so mild
Bears and forbears, as thou hast done,
With me thy sinful child.

Only to sit and think of God —
O what a joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name, —
Earth has no higher bliss!

Faber.

## SECTION II.

## THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM ON EARTH.

*"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

BY the kingdom of God is signified his reign, or dominion. The Old Testament Scriptures speak of God as Lord and King; of his kingdom as over all the earth; of his Sovereignty as universal.

The New Testament has a still clearer definition of this kingdom in its spiritual sense. John, the forerunner of Jesus, came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand,"[1] an announcement of the new dispensation, — the Gospel. Olden prophecy had thus declared. "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all nations, kindreds, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."[2] It was not a temporal kingdom, such as the Jews were looking for, and such as the Chris-

[1] Matt. iii. 2. [2] Dan. vii. 14.

tian disciples themselves were at first expecting. It was not to come with outward observation. It savored not of the earthly or material. When Pilate asked the question of Jesus, "Art thou a king, then?" he received the answer, "My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, then would my servants fight;" they would then take the hostile attitude of the military forces of the world. He adds, "But now is my kingdom not from hence."[1] It was a heavenly kingdom, rule, government, to be set up with man, such as had been declared and maintained by no earthly rulers hitherto.

And what are some of the constituents of this kingdom? We answer

1. Truth. This is one explanation which Jesus gives of his kingdom, in his reply to Pilate. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."[2] Men were in ignorance and error. "They knew not God, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Christ came to enlighten them; to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of sin to holiness. This is the first process of salvation, as the apostle affirms: "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the

[1] John xviii. 36. [2] John xviii. 37.

knowledge of the truth."[1] In his prayer to the Father Jesus asks, "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth."[2] To the Ephesians, speaking of the fulness of time, when all things shall be gathered together in Christ, the apostle writes: "In whom (Christ) ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."[3]

This kingdom is a school for the instruction of souls in the truth. And the instruction is indispensable to their highest good. They cannot truly live in falsehood, cannot find spiritual healthfulness in a lie. Humanity will never thus rest. It will be in turmoil and confusion until the truth of God comes to effect order and peace. In proof of this we refer to the incessant religious controversies of the past, and the continuance of them now. Cry out as some may for the cessation of this controversy, for an end of theological debate, for a truce to the further discussion of dogmas, the cry is a vain one. The cessation will not be so long as error remains. The truth will always be questioning her. They can never dwell in peace together; nor ought we to pray that they should. We should be charitable and merciful towards each other in view of

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 4. [2] John xvii. 17. [3] Eph. i. 13

errors which we may hold sincerely. Christians should endeavor to keep the unity of Christ's spirit, loving "one another with pure hearts, fervently;" but never for this think of holding the truth of any the less importance; for none of them are great enough to comprehend all of it—the truth as it is in Christ. In this truth only can they find surest freedom themselves, or most effectually aid in working out the spiritual freedom of all the churches and of all mankind. The words of Jesus are full of divinest meaning: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."[1] Through the diffusion of heavenly truth, then, will God's kingdom come to man.

2. Righteousness is another constituent of this kingdom. It is that which is essentially wrong with mankind that Christ comes to put away; it is the reign of righteousness which he is to establish; that reign of God which the Scriptures so emphatically affirm. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."[2] This is the most glorious manifestation he makes to man. The Psalmist says: "He shall judge the world in righteousness and the people with his truth. Thy righteousness is like the great moun-

[1] John viii. 32. [2] Ps. xcvii. 2.

tains; the heavens shall declare thy righteousness."[1] In his discourse to the assembly at Athens, Paul announced this characteristic of the new dispensation. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness,"[2] by Jesus Christ. How the apostles preached this righteousness! "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord;" that men should repent, should "put off their sins by righteousness." Such was the call of these first heralds of the cross. They were out on their mission to make the world better; not to parley with its wrongs; not to conciliate its evils; not to compromise the right, but to vindicate it in the face of all opposition through evil and through good report. And wherever the gospel has been preached since their day, amid all the misconceptions, shortcomings, and failures of its advocates, it has been a call to "glory, honor, incorruptibleness, eternal life." This is what the Christian church stands for at the present hour. It has aided in the work of heavenly righteousness

[1] Ps. xcvi. 13; xxxvi. 6; xcvii. 6. [2] Acts xvii. 31.

with man. It is a rebuke to the assailant forces of human wrong; it is the rectifier of the world's life; it is or should be the world's reformer, pointing it onward, leading it upward, inspiring it to new and grander efforts in the work of human improvement, in the light of the olden prophecy respecting the new dispensation: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought ow; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."[1] Yes, the true Christian church is "the power that makes for righteousness,"—the God-power in man. It is only in righteousness that its best exposition can be made through the individual soul; it is only in bringing all souls under the dominion of righteousness that it can be made most glorious evermore.

3. Peace is another element of this heavenly kingdom. It was into a world of division and strife that Christ came. The angelic announcement of him was that of "peace on earth and good will toward men." This the old dispensation had foreshadowed. Ancient prophecy had sung of this grand consummation, when swords

[1] Isa. xl. 4.

should be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and the nations should learn war no more. And this peace was to come of the righteousness just spoken of. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."[1] No permanent peace can come otherwise. The wrong that abounds with mankind will keep the world ajar so long as it has the means and power of operating. Men with all their schemes and appliances, social, political, educational, may attempt this needed good; but so long as they fail to give heed to this essential righteousness, so long will their pretensions be but the cry of "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." There is no short road to this heavenly consummation. The divine ordination is that it shall come through the soul's obedience to the heavenly law.

Peace is a significant word in the Christian's vocabulary. Said Jesus to his disciples, encouraging them to faithfulness, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace:" the resting of the soul in the divine purposes; its readiness to hear the divine word, and follow the divine leading; its delight to abide

[1] Isa. xxxii. 17.

under the shadow of the Almighty. Dr. Channing, in one of his discourses, well expresses this condition of the soul. "There is a twofold peace. The first is negative; a relief from disquiet and corroding care. It is a repose after conflict and storms. But there is another and a higher peace to which this is but the prelude, a 'peace of God that passeth understanding,' and properly called 'the kingdom of heaven within us.' It is the highest and most strenuous action of the soul, but an entirely harmonious action, in which all our powers and affections are blended in a beautiful proportion, and sustain and perfect one another. It is more than silence after storms. It is as the concord of all melodious sounds. It is a conscious harmony with God and the creation, an alliance of love with all beings, a sympathy with all that is pure and happy, a surrender of every separate will and interest, a participation of the spirit and life of the universe, an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original." Wesley prays for it in one of his truly evangelical hymns: —

"The kingdom of established peace,
Which can no more remove;
The perfect powers of godliness,
The omnipotence of love."

4. This kingdom is one of Joy. "Glad tidings of great joy to all people." Thus was it heralded at Bethlehem. And how thus? Because of the intent of this heavenly dispensation. It embraces the highest good of man,—of every man; his spiritual life and blessing. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven."[1] What greater good for our nature can be imagined than this? Reconciliation to God; harmony with him; life in his service and love? This was the unspeakable joy set before Jesus, for which he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high." This mission was one worthy of heaven's wisdom and goodness, "worthy of all acceptation" by man. It was itself a joy: it ever will be to all who have rightful conceptions of it. There is no indication of final failure in it; no dark background of unreconciliation and woe to be had in eternal contemplation; no rejoicing of the redeemed in heaven over the finally lost in hell; no uncertainty, no contingency, connected with

[1] Col. i. 19, 20.

the accomplishment of the intent of him who said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."[1]

Christianity comes as a joy to man, — his inward, highest joy. Jesus said to his disciples, "These words have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."[2] Wherever the message of the gospel went, in the times of its early ministry, it was a messenger of joy. Its annunciations were all hopeful, its calls full of encouragement and inspiration to all who would heed them. It would make a joy of obedience, a delight of God's service; the divine commandments more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey to the soul's taste, — the incomparable good. This is the definition given by Peter: "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."[3]

These, then, are the main constituents of the kingdom of God, or of heaven. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."[4] This kingdom came long centuries ago; came in

[1] John iv. 34. [2] John xv. 11.
[3] 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. [4] Rom. xiv. 17.

divine power and glory. And still the petition is to be offered that it may come. All souls need it; all good spirits are imploring that it may prevail. All Christians do most heartily agree in this utterance of the model prayer of the world's teacher: "Thy kingdom come."

And what, more particularly speaking, do we understand by the prevalence of this kingdom? The next words of the prayer inform us. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." By doing the divine will, as here expressed, we understand, obedience to God's laws, unwavering trust in his beneficent purposes.

The direction to pray that the divine will may be done on earth as in heaven assures us of the perfectness of this service on the part of heavenly beings. The divine law is obeyed by them, not through constraint, not reluctantly, but in devotedness of spirit, in readiness of action. Their delight is in the law of the Lord. The Psalmist speaks of the angels "who excel in strength, who do God's will, hearkening to the voice of his word."[1] It is the will of love, the service of love on their part. This makes heaven, — the highest heaven; love of the divine will and life in it.

[1] Ps. ciii. 20.

But men are not angels of the heavenly state. Why are they called upon to do God's will here in this their earthly abode where temptations to evil are so largely and constantly abounding? Is it possible, with these adverse environments, for all men to become obedient subjects to the divine law? These questions often meet us, and at times from those who have no faith in this consummation so devoutly to be wished, the doing of the heavenly will everywhere with man. They distrust human nature; they see in the abounding moral evil of the world, in the sinful actions of men, too great a force to be overcome by the power of righteousness. They have little faith in reformatory movements for the putting away of hurtful habits and institutions. The world always has been thus afflicted with human ignorance, error, and moral corruption: it must needs be so in all the future of its history. You cannot change human nature.

Now we have to say, in reply to all these doubtful suggestions, that Christ has come, the Sent of his Father; that his religion is in the world to effect this very good. Had there not been need of this effectual working of righteousness in man to this beneficent end, we should have had no Christ, no Gospel, no hope of the redemp-

tion of humanity from evil and its life in the eternal good. It was because sin and moral death were in the world that Christ appeared in it, to release men from their thraldom, and make them free in the knowledge of truth and the service of righteousness. It is because man is capable of obedience to the divine law, that he is called upon to repent of his unrighteous doings, and serve the Lord his God. It is because there have been those among God's earthly children who have thus lived and proved their loyalty to him and to his law; it is because there are such now on earth, living near to him in obedience of spirit and in the life of his love, that we have hopefulness of still greater accomplishments in this direction. We judge of the capacities of our nature by what we see of its highest attainments, and not from its lowest conditions. If one soul here has found its chief life and has glorified its own nature and blest the world in its obedience to the heavenly will, then other souls may have a similar experience. If ten, a hundred, a thousand souls can thus conform to the will of the Father, can thus bring the heavenly into the earthly life, who are we that we should doubt or deny this same work of righteousness with a far greater number of other souls? If one nation or people

can be enlightened and morally elevated and blest by the Gospel, so can another and another, until its heavenly radiance has reached all lands, and its benign influence has sanctified all souls. This is implied in the very command of the Saviour to his apostles: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."[1]

The words of that distinguished author, the late John Stuart Mill, in reference to the mitigation or removal of most of the world's evils, are worthy of consideration, and all the more so because the view is not taken from a professedly Christian stand-point. "No one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will, if human affairs continue to improve, be in the end reduced within narrow limits. All the grand sources of human suffering are in a great degree — many of them most entirely — conquerable by human care and effort: and though their removal is egregiously slow, though a long succession of generations will perish in the breach before the conquest is completed and this world becomes all that, if will and knowledge were not wanting, it might easily be made, yet every mind suffi-

[1] Mark xvi. 15.

ciently intelligent and generous to bear a part however small and unconspicuous in the endeavor, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself, which he would not for any bribe in the form of selfish indulgence consent to be without." The capabilities and possibilities of man are taken into the account by that wisdom which sent Christ into the world "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."[1] If there are temptations here, they are to be encountered; if evil passions, they are to be dealt with and subdued. This very call to do the divine will signifies a strife, an accomplishment, a triumph. And the heavenly aid is promised to all who enter upon it; aid such as Christ himself received, and which he has promised to all who would do the will of the Father in his spirit and name.

True, the process may seem a slow one, when the vast amount of the work to be done is realized. But time is not measured by the Almighty as it is by mortals. With him, "one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day."[2]

This conformity of the soul to the divine will must begin with the individual. He who would

[1] John iii. 17. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 8.

truly pray "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," needs to have this kingdom set up in his own heart: its essential elements therein,—truth, righteousness, peace, joy; love to the Highest, love to his fellow-men. Every acquisition thus made is so much secured towards the desired blessing. If you would have the heavenly come to mankind universally, give yourself up, your powers, your life, to its holy service. So much will then be done to prove your prayer a sincere one, and so much towards this desired consummation.

Prayer for the divine will to be done on earth as it is in heaven implies, on the part of mortals, resignation to this will under the trials and afflictions of human life. If the glorified beings who inherit the heavenly state are freed from earthly ills, God's children here are not. There are powers to which man is subject, beyond his control; ills besetting him which seem not to come of his volition, and which he has not the power to lessen or subdue; accidents, calamities which come unforeseen; losses and adversities which tax to agony his very life-powers; sicknesses, deaths, bereavements, which bring him to a sense of his utter dependence on the great directing and disposing Power, and cause him to realize

the truth of the words of the Psalmist, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."[1] It is in the midst of such experiences that we need to feel not only that an irresistible power is at work with us, but that this power is directed by paternal love; that the God whom we recognize in our prosperity and joy is the same who is with us in our adversity and sorrow; that although to our limited vision "clouds and darkness are round about him," yet that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne;"[2] that "although he cause grief, he will yet have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies."[3] Such was the filial trust which Jesus taught; such the trust that was ever with him, even in his strongest temptation and most bitter agony. His words uttered when the weight of suffering was heaviest upon him are full of significance to all who would learn true resignation to the divine dealings, however afflictive, which they may realize: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."[4] This is not submission to blind force, to inexorable fate, the submission

[1] Ps. xxvii. 13.
[2] Ps. xcii. 2.
[3] Ps. cxlv. 9.
[4] Luke xxii. 42.

which says, "I yield only because I must," but the confident acquiescence in the heavenly appointment and ruling which the Christian philosophy affirms and commends in the admirable words of the apostle: "Now no chastening seemeth for the present joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby."[1] He who stands thus in the clear light of providential wisdom and goodness, and whose heart is inspired with child-like love and confidence toward the Infinite One, can most sincerely and readily offer the petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Let me say, also, that this portion of the Lord's Prayer which we are now considering recognizes faith in the accomplishment of the divine purposes with man. There are millions of prayers offered up for the salvation of the world by those who have never yet had a conviction that the world could or would be saved. It is only a part of mankind which such petitions have ever recognized as really the subjects of the saving grace of the Father of all. But this prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," means more than this; means the spiritual enlightenment

[1] Heb. xii. 11.

and obedience of all souls. And this is ever kept in view as the object and end of the mission of Him who was sent of the Father to be the Saviour of the world. He has a positive will to be accomplished in this coming and ruling of his holy Son. We are expressly informed respecting it by the Christian apostle: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him."[1] Hence the prayer of faith is the true one respecting this coming of the heavenly kingdom, and obedience to the heavenly will, on the part of God's earthly children. Thus can the Christian pray for what he believes will be ultimately accomplished through that power of the gracious Father, "by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself;"[2] prayer for the accomplishment of the purposes of divine grace with man, —

"that grace
Which sanctifies and saves our race."

This coming of God's kingdom, and the doing of his will on the earth, is a consideration which

[1] Eph. i. 9, 10. [2] Phil. iii. 21.

ought to be more real and abiding with all Christians. Alas! is it not otherwise? The words of this prayer ought to be a standing reproof to all the jealousies and divisions and contentions among Christian sects in reference to subjects of minor consideration, while the great essentials of the heavenly kingdom, love to God and love to man, are too often left out of sight. We can never have a united world with a divided and distracted church in it. "By this," said Jesus, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."[1] By this baptism of love and diffusion of its spirit shall the earthly be most effectually transformed into the heavenly, and Christianity prove itself "the power of God unto salvation."

"Good will to men! O God, we hail
This, of thy law the sum;
For as this shall o'er earth prevail,
So shall thy kingdom come."

[1] John xiii. 35.

## THY KINGDOM COME.

Oh, Father, let thy kingdom come,
Thy kingdom built on love and grace!
In every nation give it room,
In every heart afford it place:
The earth is thine, set up thy throne,
And claim the kingdoms as thine own.

Still error's awful darkness reigns,
And sinners scorn thy holy fear;
Still Satan holds the heart in chains
Where'er thy messengers appear:
Rise, we beseech thee, Lord, and bless
The world with truth and righteousness.

More laborers in the vineyard send,
And pour thine unction on them all;
Give them a voice to shake and bend
The mountains high and cedars tall!
Bid wars and blind ambitions cease,
And fill the world with heavenly peace!

English Collection.

## SECTION III.

## GOD THE GRACIOUS PROVIDER.

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*"

THE leading thought which these words involve is that of man's constant dependence upon God; a truth of which the Scriptures are constantly reminding us. "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."[1]

These are familiar passages of the olden word, signifying the Source of all our life-supplies. This petition is both a recognition and imploration of this infinite fulness, this supplying power.

It recognizes our bodily needs. These are a part of our earthly being and experience, and are to be rationally regarded as such. Man's bodily creation is one of the wonders of the Divinity. Its whole structure is a display of infinite wisdom, skill, and goodness. The body is a struc-

[1] Ps. c. 3; cxlv. 15, 16.

ture living under law, and is so to be regarded and treated. When called upon to glorify our Creator, it is in our "bodies and spirits" which are his. That we present "our bodies (all our powers) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service,"[1] is a plain apostolic injunction. Never are we to deem our bodies essentially or relatively mean or worthless, but always as tenements of the Spirit, as temples of the living God. Although an apostle speaks in one place of "our vile bodies" in contrast with the glorified body of Christ, it is not to signify their actual vileness, but rather their corruptibleness, or liability to decay. God has constituted "this earthly house of our tabernacle" that it may be honored and glorified in his service, and thus be a source of continual enjoyment so long as man is here its inhabitant.

One want of the body is its daily food, that on which it must subsist. In this respect man resembles the inferior order of animal beings. He must look with them, but with far clearer apprehension than they, to the great unfailing Source. Hence the propriety of his use of the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The petition presupposes the Source of supply.

[1] Rom. xii. 1.

It is given to be universally used. What does this signify? That God has made ample provision for the wants of his children. This world, so full of his providential resources, declares it. He who appointed summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, who gave the earth its productive power, spread over it the fruits which man needed, and enclosed within it so many treasures to be opened up by human effort and made conducive to human enjoyment, intends the supply of the temporal wants of his offspring. That they do not all yet receive and enjoy these blessings is because of their ignorance or perverseness; is because they have not yet learned to use these bounties as they ought. They have ignorantly overlooked or wickedly squandered them.

It was to replenish and subdue the earth that man was appointed in the beginning to make it fruitful and enjoyable; a habitation of order, happiness, and peace; a world of that abundance where all should be somehow supplied, and none should suffer from the neglect or envy or hatred of their fellow-men. This is why he gave the earth to his children, why he sent them forth to labor to this great end.

But instead of being "helpers one of another," men have been hindrances; instead of lovers and

saviors, haters and destroyers of their kindred. Such has been much of the world's history, written or unwritten; divisions, dissensions, intrigues, wars, cruelties, desolations, — these have filled too many pages of the annals of our race, showing how this human power has been perverted, how the divine bounties have been misused, and how much yet remains to be known and accomplished of God's wisdom and will with his children.

We have reason for thanksgiving, however, for what of this good has been effected in our world. Some of its darkness has been penetrated by the heavenly light, some of its abuses have been corrected, some advancement has been made in the knowledge and application of the divine laws, as these relate to human life and happiness. But this progress towards the good yet in store for man in the divine counsels is in its early stages of development. These grave and irrepressible questions involving the ways and means of human subsistence and comfort, labor and capital, the rights and duties of employers and employees, the elevating of the masses to that point where the good of the greatest number can be most effectually secured, — all indicate this progress, all portend its continuation, all evince that

the divine purpose is in process of fulfilment, and that although there may ever be on earth human inequalities, yet that these shall serve to render men more lenient towards each other, more sensitive as helpers, the stronger of the weaker, more ready to be ministers of mercy and to do good as they have opportunity. As one of the living preachers of our day has so truly said, "That spirit which looks after the wants of the needy is the spirit which beyond all others will help along a golden age. That alone Christianizes which cares for the most and worst."[1]

Enough for all! This is the word which God speaks to man in the wonderful and munificent provisions he has made for the supply of his wants. When will all men realize and enjoy this truth? The plain answer is, when they conform to God's laws; when they make up their minds to heed this divine direction, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;"[2] life in the life and spirit of his requirements. As one of our able writers has so sensibly affirmed, "lack of bread flows from injustice, injustice from scarcity, scarcity from idleness, idleness from disobedience, disobedience from irrever-

[1] Prof. Swing. [2] Matt. vi. 33.

ence, and irreverence from ignorance of God, and the remedy is here provided for all these evils."[1]

So far as the principles of this heavenly kingdom find acceptance in our world, so far do the blessed humanities make themselves evident, so far is man a helper of his brother, so far do the strong willingly and gladly bear the infirmities of the weak, so far does the helpful spirit abound which inspired the great Head of our race to say, "He that will be greatest among you, let him be the servant of all."

Enough for all! How shall men realize this great truth? By turning their attention to it, setting their wills upon working out the problem of securing it in larger measures, not only for themselves but for their fellow-men. God intends that this good shall be realized, but that it shall come by the education of his children in his truth and righteousness. Were the wits of men only employed in searching out and securing these greater benefits with a tithe of the energy with which they are enlisted in the conflict of selfish competitions with each other, we should soon witness a new aspect of things in our survey of human society.

[1] Rev. I. D. Williamson, D.D.

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals nor forts."

Surely; and this may we say of power and wealth in the unbinding of the heavy burdens of humanity; aiding the destitute, encouraging industries, educating the ignorant, uplifting the lowly, arousing the indolent to useful action, and facilitating the onward movement of the great family of mankind. Suppose the will-power of the First Napoleon, instead of being expended and dissipated in the attempt to subdue nations by physical force, put into the work of philanthropy and the spiritual regeneration of the multitude of our race? How much grander a record would be his at this hour in the world's blessing and peace, and what an immortal lustre would have glorified his name through all the ages to come!

And so in the light of this great truth of God's fulness and willingness to supply the wants of his children, we are encouraged to ask of him, "Give us this day our daily bread." How should we ask? Let us attempt to answer.

1. With a sense of our constant dependence upon him. We are too apt to keep this out of mind, too prone to think more of the general

than of the particular providence from which we draw our life supplies. But this is the very fact which should be among the most impressive in our life experiences, not merely the occasional but the constant nearness of God; his nearness not in the extraordinary occurrences that arrest our attention, but in "the daily round, the common task," the most quiet courses of our earthly life. When deprivation and famine come, men may feel their dependence on the supplying power, and in their destitution or despair cry out to God; just as when sudden sickness or danger may bring the apprehension of death to mortals, they are startled into serious and fearful concern, and think of the Providence that holds all life, and are moved to prayerfulness that life may be prolonged. Such is human short-sightedness and ingratitude. But God never ceases to be merciful. The manifestations of his loving-kindness are constantly about us, and every day should find us jubilant with heart-praises for his abounding mercies.

It is of the instant providence of God that we need to be mindful; his providence in little things; the providence in which Jesus instructs us as he speaks of that mindfulness which notes the fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs of

our heads. It is not only in the wonders which the telescope reveals, but in the infinitesimal revelations opened through the microscope to our vision, that we find the evidences of the marvellous work and infinite care of the Creator. It is the traveller Park in the African wilderness, who tells us of this thought that aroused him from despondency as he lay feverish and exhausted upon the earth, about to give up his journeying in utter despair. A tiny moss-tuft, of exquisite formation, caught his eye. The conviction came, Can he who wrought, and who in this lone waste cares for, this delicate and beautiful work of his hand, overlook one of his needy children like me? It gave him inspiration to arise and move onward to new aid and encouragement that awaited him.

In the minutest affairs of life may we read the workings of divine wisdom and goodness; and as our daily wants return, may we devoutly call on the Giver of all good to supply them. "To realize that He whom the angels cannot fully know, mingles his presence with our common walks, and hears and answers the widow's cry for bread, seems the most appropriate faith for a truly devout soul." [1]

[1] Rev. E. H. Chapin, D.D.

2. In offering this prayer for daily bread, the prayer also for divine aid in seeking and securing the blessing is to be included. It is a life of action to which God's children are called. This earth, fitted up for them, is one which they are to improve and replenish, to subdue and make fruitful. In Eden or out of it, man was to attend to this work given him. Nothing can be plainer. "To dress and to keep" the earthly paradise, and to eat bread by the sweat of his brow elsewhere, was the appointment of divine wisdom respecting him. And a righteous appointment it is, with all the hardship that may be attendant on it; hardship which the higher education and experience of our race shall one day lessen and overcome, when the good of one shall be the good of all, and mankind shall be fraternal helpers one of another.

But it is not for us to be mere dreamers of this "good time coming," of this epicurean garden or earthly Mohammedan heaven of which the poet has so humorously sung, when

> "The land unploughed shall yield its crop,
> Pure honey from the oak shall drop,
> The fountain shall run milk;
> The thistle shall the lily bear,
> And every bramble roses wear,
> And every worm make silk."

anscendental prophets may sometimes indulge these visions, but they are not for sober-thinkg mortals who would read aright God's provinces and act in harmony with them. It is by peated, incessant, earnest human effort that r world has thus far made progress, and enjoys present degree of healthful and hopeful prosrity. If God is a worker, so must his child ; and he has placed his children in this world is to prove themselves worthy of their origin; that the call to daily exertion upon us is one ich we are to regard as among the most benefit in which our Father can honor us.

It is for *needed* bread that man is directed to or; not for luxuries to pamper his appetite d sink him in earthliness. "Feed me with cessary food," is an old prayer of wisdom. Ye ask, and ye receive not," writes a Christian ostle, "because ye ask amiss, that ye may conme it upon your lusts."[1] Wealth, elegance, finement may have their ministries with those o hold them and would improve others in the e of them. But these are not to be the chief essings sought. That which is indispensable is st to be asked for, and the means to secure it. rely among the most favored of mortals are

[1] James iv. 3.

the honest, industrious laborers of our race, going forth cheerfully to their daily tasks, inspired through all their rounds of duty not only with the desire of living themselves by their repeated endeavors and accomplishments, but moved with deepest interest in others dear to them and dependent upon their exertions for the supplies and comforts of daily life. Such have a right to send up their humble, trusting petition, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Connected also with this prayer should be the thought of that other need which every true soul must realize as our whole nature is taken into the account. I mean the daily supply of our spiritual wants from Him who is the spirit's Source and fulness. For not with material bread alone can this life be replenished and sustained. It is the soul's manna upon which we must feed, to have the highest life, "the bread of God that cometh down from heaven,"[1] the indwelling Word, the sustenance which that Holy One and Just signified when he said, "I am that bread of life."[2] Poor and hungered, although they know it not, destitute although they imagine they have fulness, are multitudes of mankind, who with all their earthly abundance are daily without heav-

[1] John vi. 33. [2] John vi. 48.

nly life supplies; whose tables may be most eavily laden with the choicest luxuries the arth can bestow, while spiritually they are in hat situation described by the prophet of old, "As when a hungry man dreameth and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite."[1] It is that we may be delivered from this destitution and be blest with spiritual fulness and strength, that we are called upon to offer this daily petition to the Giver of all good.

That was a scene to be remembered related by Elihu Burritt, of the poor nailer in England, seated in the midst of his family at their table, denying himself his share of the food, that they might have the more of it, and saying to his visitor, "I keep my New Testament by me, and find that when the meal is scant I am wonderfully helped by reading precious words in it. I think the New Testament must have been written for poor nailers." It was written for all God's poor,—and this includes the race,—and their earthly supplies will most surely come to them all as its perfect teachings are understood and

[1] Isa. xxix. 9.

heeded, and applied to the wants of human ciety everywhere. It was written, too, that these poor might be supplied not only with meat that perisheth, but with that which endu unto life eternal.

"Give us *this day* our daily bread." clearly this language implies our daily needs, the duty of our remembrance of them. Each is a renewal of life with us, requiring new ports and supplies. And daily should our he go out to the gracious Father from a sens our dependence upon his bounty, and in live gratitude that we are permitted to rely upon and to offer him the daily tribute of our tha giving for his unfailing love.

With these thoughts in mind, what car more evident than the duty of this daily, de acknowledgment of God and thankful impl tion of his favor in the place of all places w his tender mercies are made most precious to connected as they are with the dearest asso tions of our earthly existence; I mean the far and home. The family altar; it is of th speak, it is for this I plead. Where should worshipping altar be set up if not here, in domestic sanctuary, where centre so many of tenderest interests and experiences of our mo

life? where morning and evening call upon us to recount the dealings of our Heavenly Guardian, and where season after season and year after year we are realizing life in its most sacred phases, and strengthening attachments and deepening affections which Christian faith and hope assure us are to be unbroken for ever? Who, I ask, have stronger reasons than they who accept the faith of that Gospel which affirms God's ability and purpose to supply the spiritual wants of all his children, for making their homes daily vocal with ascriptions to heaven and humble implorations of that loving-kindness which holds all kindreds, families, and homes of the earth in its benign embrace?

The blessed Universalism of this prayer! Can we fail to see it? Why the petition? Because we are taught to raise it, and on heavenly authority, too. It is in the model prayer given us by Jesus. It recognizes God's constant, unfailing, providential care. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."[1]

Are there any needs in his universe which his infinite resources are not adequate to meet? Must any of his children finally die of starvation because there is not bread enough in his store-

[1] Matt. vi. 32.

house for their spiritual supplies? Is any professed minister of Christ's Gospel prepared to affirm this? Will not Calvinism declare that God has the power though not the disposition to save all souls? Will not Arminianism say, Christ is the provision made by the Father for the spiritual needs of the race, although the human will shall prevent the blessing from being universal? What can obviate these strange contradictions but the clear and unqualified Universalism of the New Testament, that God's means for their salvation will never be withheld so long as his children have need of them?

We may rest assured that God's provisions are adequate to all the wants of his children. He has not brought into existence any larger family than he can paternally care for. He will make every needed sacrifice for their welfare. He will overcome any power that may oppose his gracious designs respecting them. The scriptures are full of these indications and affirmations of his adequate spiritual supplies. How significant the call of Wisdom as in the Book of Proverbs. She is there represented as having built her house, hewed out her seven pillars, killed her beasts, furnished her tables, sent forth her invitations; as crying upon the high places of the city, Come,

partake of the feast; forsake the foolish and live. The invitation by the prophet Isaiah is similar. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."[1] And again, prophesying the ample fulness of the Gospel: "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things; a feast of wine on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it."[2] Christ, in the great day of the Feast at Jerusalem, stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."[3]

Should a wealthy inhabitant of one of our large cities arrange for a public entertainment,

[1] Isa. lv. 2. [2] Isa. xxv. 8. [3] John vii. 37.

and send his servants into the streets to invite the people in language like this which we find in the scriptures inviting men to this feast of heavenly grace, all who heard such invitations must believe that they were welcome, or that the one who had given them was a deceiver. To speak of general calls or special calls would be absurd. All are called and for ever called, until all shall hear and live.

But what if men will not come? asks one who believes that man's eternal good depends on the decision of his own free will while in this earthly state. We answer, so long as he will not, he must be destitute of the blessings which living faith in the Gospel secures. But who will presume that God will suffer any of his children to starve eternally while in his storehouse there is bread enough and to spare? Would an earthly parent fear the starvation of his children if he had bread enough to give them? True, there may be difficulties to remove; want of knowledge, the plague of a disobedient heart; but enlightenment, and the hungering of the soul at last for its true aliment, will bring the erring and wandering to the Father's house and feast. Joseph's brethren were humbled by famine to go to the one whom they had rejected for a supply. By the force of

unger the prodigal was brought to the paternal ome. As surely under the righteous reign of the Father of all, will his children come at last to the knowledge of his truth and the joys of his salvation. Of this glorious consummation in Christ the scriptures assure us. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven."[1] God will prove himself evermore to his children as they become more and more acquainted with him, a helpful God, never leaving his government in the hands of any other ruler or disposer, but himself holding it in his infinite wisdom, paternal anxiousness, inflexible justice, illimitable love.

Welcome now and welcome evermore are all to the heavenly banquet! "The Spirit and the bride say Come, and let him that heareth say Come, and whosoever will let him come!"[2]

[1] Col. i. 19, 20. [2] Rev. xxii. 17.

## OUR DAILY BREAD.

Only to-day! dark looms the coming morrow;
  Behind, sad yesterdays are lying dead;
Each moment keeps slow step with care and sorrow;
  Give us, we ask, to-day our daily bread, —
    Only to-day!

We have no strength to walk unless thou lead us;
  Sin hides, each side, the straight and narrow way;
Our hungry souls must faint except Thou feed us;
  Help us, we plead, to live aright to-day, —
    Only to-day!

We would not pierce the misty clouds around us;
  Nor fathom what the future has in store;
But day by day thy loving care hath found us;
  Lead us to-day, O Lord, we ask no more, —
    Only to-day!

We could not bear the weight a lifetime carries;
  Our strength grows weakness if we do but try;
To-morrow comes, with face that never tarries;
  Help us to-day, O Lord, is all our cry, —
    Only to-day!

Mrs. M. E. C. Bates

## SECTION IV.

## THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD.

*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

"FORGIVE us our debts" and "forgive us our trespasses" are words used interchangeably by Jesus. They have the same meaning. They signify also our offences or sins.

Man is here recognized as a moral being, a child of God, spiritually, as well as his offspring by creative power. He is recognized also as a sinner. This is one view of his nature and condition all through the scriptures. Lofty as is this nature, and far-reaching and wonderful as its capacities for good are seen to be, yet the fact that man is in some sense a transgressor of the Divine law is ever apparent. Patriarch, prophet, apostle, saint of whatever age or degree of enlightenment, all acknowledge their short-coming and sinfulness before the Most High and Most Holy. "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me," is a voice of the Old Testament history. "If we say we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,"[1] is an equally emphatic utterance of the New.

Wherever man dwells, he is a being of moral consciousness; a subject of conscience, however dark or enlightened his conscience may be. It speaks and impels to action amid the grossest superstitions and devotions of heathendom, as in the clearest light which surrounds the worshipper in the Christian temple. The sense of wrong is realized; the appeal for the Divine favor is made. No degree of mental culture to which man has arrived has obliterated this fact of his liability to do wrong, of the need of the Divine power to regard in mercy this infirmity of our common nature: —

> "Divine authority within man's breast,
> Brings every thought, word, action to the test;
> Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
> As reason or as passion takes the reins.
> Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,
> Cries in his startled ear, Abstain from sin!"

Sinners as men are, they are not left hopelessly to their own sinfulness. In the light of the Christian Revelation they are encouraged to lift up the prayer to God for the forgiveness

[1] Ps. li. 3; 1 John i. 8.

of their offences against him, their transgressions of his holy law. Hence the propriety of this petition, "Forgive us our debts," or "trespasses."

And what are we to understand by forgiveness, as here used? We ask this question, because it now claims our first attention, and because we desire to reach the truth as it was intended to be taught by the holy author of the prayer. Is the forgiveness here spoken of that of punishment or of sin? We raise this question because of opinions involved in it, which are connected with what is affirmed to be the Christian theology of our churches. There is a very prevalent conviction that the forgiveness of sin consists chiefly or solely in the remission of the penalty incurred through past transgressions. But we do not so understand the teachings of Reason or Divine Revelation.

This idea does injustice to the Divine character. It represents God as having instituted hard and inexorable laws, not so much in reference to the correction and reformation of his offending children, as for the vindication of his eternal greatness and glory. It signifies so much punishment for so much sinning, a punishment to be meted out to the uttermost, even in the eternal torment of great multitudes of these trans-

gressors. But mercy, another attribute of the Infinite One, is represented as pleading for a suspension of the work of justice, and thus for the release of the sinner from that which was justly due him for his offences.

A Christian poet has affirmed "A God *all* mercy is a God unjust." As though his attributes could conflict with each other, as might be said of many of the gods having their origin in the foolish imaginations of men.

No, the more truthful view is, that the Divine justice and mercy are ever in harmony; that God's laws are so perfect as to need no suspension of their operations, no abatement of their penalties. They are not instituted as retaliatory scourges, but rather as corrective inflictions. They have not only pain, suffering, correction in view, but reformation also. The Divine law has a constant claim on man.

And what is this? We answer, Obedience. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."[1] This is the claim, and this being secured, all the claims of justice are satisfied. And this mercy as well as justice demands. It is in this equitable justice that mercy is recognized as in the language of the Psalmist, "Unto thee, O

[1] Matt. xxii. 37.

Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his works."[1]

Forgiveness, then, is not a remission of deserved punishment. Why should it be? If the punishment be strictly just, why should it not be inflicted? If unjust, we might reasonably ask that it be not endured, but that the one threatened with it might escape. But we cannot conceive of injustice on the part of the All-Perfect One; and no prayer for escape from his injustice need ever be made by his offspring.

"Forgive us our debts, our trespasses," our sins, and not the punishment for them; this seems very plainly to be the meaning of the text. An objection to this view has sometimes been urged, founded on the expression, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." How do we forgive our debtors but by remitting the payment; and if so, why may not God forgive our sins by remitting the punishment? Some theologians have really undertaken to treat lightly this doctrine of the forgiveness of sin while the punishment for it is inflicted, as offering no occasion to God to be merciful to his offending children. The elder Dr. Beecher once characterized the Universalist idea of the forgiveness of sin

[1] Ps. lxii. 12.

and just punishment of the sinner as
denying the dealing of God's mercy v
offending child. We are unable, howeve
the force of such a statement.

Forgiving a debtor and yet claiming pa
is it asked how this can be? Our reply
we sometimes forgive a debtor who does
and also we may not forgive a debtor w
pay. How was this debt to us incurred?
what spirit is the debt paid or unpaid?
ness has not reference to the mere pay
the debt. It is not punishment that corr
to payment. It is not suffering that is d
us to our Heavenly Father. It is the c
his will as he demands this of us; it is
obedience rendered; it is holy, filial lo
cised towards him; it is all this which
and who among mortals does not fall sho
Who renders the payment in full? Th
we not rightfully ask of God, "Forgive
debts"? His demands against us are
by punishment, hence the forgiveness
debts, morally speaking, is not the remi
punishment.

Furthermore; how can we carry out tl
tion requiring the absolute remission of
ment of debts? What creditor will re

nent of all debts due him? Who can, or ought to do this? And will God ask of his lren thus to forgive all debts, thus to refuse payment? He has not so taught us in his d. But the prayer is, "Forgive us our debts in the same manner as) we forgive our debt- ' To give the objection any force, we are to implore forgiveness of God if we require payment of a single debt due us from our w-men! It is plain, then, that this objection isound, and that the forgiveness of our debts espasses is not the remission of punishment. hat then does the Divine forgiveness embrace imply? We answer,

Cleansing, purifying, putting away. The k word commonly rendered to forgive, means ike away. Thus Christ is declared to be "the ib of God, that taketh away the sin of the ld."[1] Cleansing, washing, purifying, healing, iave this signification. And these similitudes consistent with the idea of punishment on the of the offender. While sick, one before g healed, suffers pain; the *morally* diseased endures punishment.

Forgiveness, also, implies that the offending may be regarded with favor; thus regarded

[1] John i. 29.

as he was before his transgression. A just parent punishes a disobedient child, and yet this child may be forgiven by him. The punishment was deserved, the forgiveness is equally righteous on the part of the parent, and the punished one may be loved still. Thus God declares that he will not acquit the wicked, "will by no means clear the guilty,"[1] while he will as clearly forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. The sinner is punished, although his sins are not now remembered against him.

Released convicts — those who have served out their terms in prison — are not unfrequently regarded in these two senses: Some are respected and trusted without allusion to their former transgressions; others are suspected, and fail to receive the confidence of their fellow-men. The first are forgiven although punished, the last although punished are not forgiven; which instances plainly show that forgiveness does not always imply remission of punishment, and that the punished one may be forgiven.

Very clearly is this doctrine of punishment and forgiveness set forth in the scriptures. David was assured that though the Lord had put away (or forgiven) his sin, yet that his child should

[1] Exod. xxx. 7.

surely die.[1] He was pardoned, yet punished. In Isaiah we read, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins."[2] Still more emphatic is the apostle, in his letter to the Corinthian Church, where the same person is referred to. He had by evil conduct dishonored the Christian cause, and was to be "delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that he might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."[3] Afterwards it is said of him, "sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many; so that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."[4] Fully punished was the offender, and as fully was he to be forgiven, accepted, and aided as though he had not been an offender. Says the Psalmist, in a devout address to Jehovah, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Forgiveness is reconciliation be-

[1] 2 Sam. xii. [2] Isa. xl. 1, 2.
[3] 1 Cor. v. 5. [4] 2 Cor. ii. 8.

tween the two parties, the sinner and the One sinned against. When punishment for the offence of the disobedient child has been inflicted by the parent upon him, it is the joy of forgiveness on the part of the child to realize that the parent has really overlooked the offence, and is loving him as though he had not disobeyed. It is thus the sinning soul realizes the forgiveness of God after the just punishment of its transgression.

God is not only Ruler and Judge, but Father and Friend. He would not shut out his children from his presence: he delights evermore in mercy. Therefore may the vilest seek him and implore his pardoning grace.

In the light of these reflections, a few considerations seem of special importance: —

1. Our sense of sin; the fact that we are trespassers against the High and Holy One; our need of self-examination when we offer this prayer. It is no mere form of words: it has deep and solemn meaning. What need on our part does this petition imply? Reconciliation with God, readiness to do his will; peace with him. Sins of omission, sins of commission, are to be taken into the account. The sin of ingratitude is too often ours; ingratitude towards one

whose blessings have followed us ever since we began to be; temporal bestowments, spiritual benefits more than we can number. How little have we rendered for these, in glad thanksgiving, or in works of righteousness and love!

Our persistence also in our own will, when this runs contrary to the holy requirements of the infinitely just and true! We need this conviction of our wrong being and doing, and of the only effectual power that can free us from its blighting influence, and give us acceptance with the Father, and render us subjects of his peace. The petition implies a work, a struggle, it may be the hardest battling with the evils besetting us. We must fight as well as implore.

2. Forgiveness realized is the great blessing we need. This signifies our readiness to prove our fidelity by a new consecration and action. "Make me as one of thy hired servants,"[1] was the petition of the prodigal; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"[2] the imploration of the forgiven and converted apostle. Past moral wastefulness is to be taken into the account; and although this cannot be fully repaired, yet the sense of it may be an incentive to new and livelier action for the right henceforth. It is with these

[1] Luke xv. 19. [2] Acts ix. 6.

realizations that we can have the truest practic- a understanding of the petition, "Forgive us o[illegible] trespasses."

3. "As we forgive those who trespass again[illegible] st us." There have been some theological criticis[illegible]ns respecting this clause of the petition. Chrys[illegible]s-tom tells us that in the ancient church ma[illegible]y worshippers, from fear, were accustomed to o[illegible]it it altogether. Others, like Zwingle, make of it a profession of faith; or, like Luther, a vow to God; or, like Calvin, consider it as a warning to be merciful. But most interpreters have, as we think, put this reasonable construction upon it, that if our prayer for forgiveness is to be heard, it must be offered in a forgiving spirit. It has been very justly said by another, that "the remarkable feature in this clause is that it should be found where it is, apparently breaking into the chain of thought and taking the mind away from the contemplation of its relation to God into that of its relation to its fellow-man. But this also accords with the spirit of Christian prayer, which is a spirit of communion, and with the beginning of the prayer, which addresses God as 'our Father.' The whole of this clause implies the need of daily self-examination, to see whether we are at peac with God and with man."[1]

[1] Rev. J. F. Clarke, D.D.

This clause of the petition implies the condition of mind necessary on our part towards those who may have offended us, in order that we may enjoy the forgiveness of God, against whom we have sinned. Our Saviour is explicit in reference to this. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."[1] And again, "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."[2] It is an impossibility with God himself to grant us forgiveness while our hearts are not conditioned to accept and realize it. As well talk of saving a sinner in his sins. Salvation is freedom from sin; forgiveness is freedom from the spirit of hatred and strife.

We ask that God's great love may care for and bless and save us. But in what spirit? Surely, we cannot expect a realization of this blessing while our hearts have enmity towards any of our fellow-men. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"[3] Pertinent, searching ques-

[1] Matt. vi. 14, 15. [2] Mark xi. 25. [3] 1 John iv. 20.

tion! How it goes down beneath all pretension, and sheds its light through the innermost recesses of the soul!

Our selfishness and narrowness of moral vision often rebel against this exactness of the heavenly law. As in the case of the one who proposed to Jesus the question, "How often shall my brother transgress against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven."[1]

There is a gem of truth in the statement of Rev. Frederick Robertson of the Church of England. "God's forgiveness is the regeneration of our nature. God cannot avert the consequences of sin. We must get rid of these heathen ideas of God. You cannot by prayer buy off God's vindictiveness; for God is not vindictiveness, but love. You cannot by prayer avert the consequences of sin; for the consequences are inseparable from the act: you can only redeem the past by alteration of the present. By faith in God's love, by communion with his Spirit, you may redeem yourself; but you cannot win the love of God by entreaty, unless that love be yours already; yours, that is, when you claim it."

[1] Matt. xvii. 22.

The spirit of this petition is needed everywhere in human society. It is needed in our hearts, in our closets, in our churches, in all our intercourse with our fellow-men. The afflictive antagonism has been long going on between the spirit of Christ's mercy and the selfishness of man. The one has gone forth to afflict and scourge the world, the other to purify and bless it. Where the one has sent armed hosts, the other has sent teachers of truth, helpers in love's service, and ministers of salvation. Where the one has carried blight and desolation, the other has borne helpfulness and peace. And let us thank God that this struggle still continues, and is to go on. Individuals must aid in it; the nations must enter into it; humanity must welcome and promote it; until its waste places shall rejoice and its moral deserts shall bud and blossom as the rose. The world is waking to this blessed reality; is discerning more clearly than ever that "wisdom is better than weapons of war;"[1] that men were made not to curse and destroy, but to bless and to save each other; that man in his lowest estate is God's child, and worthy of all that can be done for his enlightenment and regeneration.

[1] Eccl. ix. 18.

Behold, then, in the teachings of our subject, its instructive and cheering representation of the character and will of our Father in heaven! He is gracious, let us therefore have confidence in him, and cherish as our most precious treasure the conviction of his paternity. He will by no means clear the guilty. Let this be our admonition and warning whenever and wherever we are tempted to do wrong. "For there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves; for the Lord will not lay upon man more than is right."[1] Hopeful for ourselves, hopeful for our race, may we be in the light of this Revelation of the will and work of the Highest. His Justice will have its glorious reign, his Mercy its equally glorious fulfilment. LOVE in his nature and dispensations, he demands love to him of his children, and love on their part to each other evermore! For this is the glory of his life and ours; the crowning assurance of the permanency of his government, and of the well-being of his offspring; as sings the poet: —

"Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep

[1] Job xxxiv. 22.

Encompassed by his faithful guard;
And hear, at times, a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well! "

## THE TWO ANGELS.

God called the nearest angels who dwell with him above
The tenderest one was Pity, the dearest one was Love.

"Arise," he said, "my angels! a wail of woe and sin
Steals through the gates of heaven, and saddens all within.

"My harps take up the mournful strain that from a lost world swells,
The smoke of torment clouds the light and blights the asphodels.

"Fly downward to that under world, and on its souls of pain
Let Love drop smiles like sunshine, and Pity, tears like rain!"

Two faces bowed before the Throne, veiled in their golden hair:
Four white wings lessened swiftly down the dark abyss of air.

The way was strange; the flight was long; at last the angels came
Where swung the lost and nether world, red-wrapped in rayless flame.

There Pity, shuddering, wept; but Love, with faith too strong for fear,
Took heart from God's almightiness and smiled a smile of cheer.

And lo! that tear of Pity quenched the flame whereon it fell,
And, with the sunshine of that smile, hope entered into hell!

Two unveiled faces full of joy looked upward to the Throne,
Four white wings folded at the feet of him who sat thereon!

And deeper than the sound of seas, more soft than falling flake,
Amidst the hush of wing and song the Voice Eternal spake:

"Welcome, my angels! ye have brought a holier joy to Heaven;
Henceforth its sweetest song shall be the song of sin forgiven!"

J. G. WHITTIER.

## SECTION V.

## DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL.

*"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*

THE strife with temptation is inevitable with man. He was born to it, as surely as that the Scripture declaration is true, that "the creature (the moral creation) was made subject to vanity."[1] As much of the divine as there is in man (because created in God's image), human imperfection is his also. Often the evil he would shun gains the mastery over him, and the good he would do he fails to accomplish. It has been thus with the best of our race in every age; and it will be, as we have reason to conclude, while man retains his earthly estate.

And yet this prayer of the text is a proper one for man to raise; I mean if rightly understood.

It is not a prayer that there may be no temptation. That would be a vain one; since man must ever be in some sense a subject of circum-

[1] Rom. viii. 20.

stances beyond his control. The very fact of his being tempted is a call for the right and loyal action of his moral powers.

What then is the real significance of the petition? The expression "Lead us not into temptation" is a Hebraism, according to which God is said to do that which he permits to be done. It means plainly, Suffer us not to be overcome by trial, to be led into wrong. It is a prayer for the power of resistance, for strength in the conflict, for deliverance and victory. It is another recognition of man as a moral force in the universe, called to the repelling of wrong, the advocacy of righteousness; called "to glory, honor, incorruptibleness, eternal life."[1]

Temptations here are inward from ourselves, outward from others. Of the inward temptations we are told in the New Testament; "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."[2]

The old idea has been that a personal evil spir-

[1] Rom. ii. 7. [2] James i. 13–15.

being distinct from man — a spirit who once
led in heaven and was cast out from there —
e tempter of men. So old theological fancies
spoken; so old pictures in Bibles and in
religious books have represented. But this
not seem to be the teaching of the Great
l itself. That tells us explicitly, that "every
is tempted when he is drawn away of his
lust and enticed," — "lust" here signifying
oper and irregular desires, whatever these
be; temptations from within ourselves, and
gthened or weakened according as our will
od or evil; so that we cannot excuse our-
s for sinning by charging the tempting power
an evil spirit other than our own.
tside inducements operate as tempters. Hu-
passions are excited when objects are pre-
d for their gratification. The love of money
f power, and of the indulgence of the bodily
ites; how these allure men from the ways
ghteousness, and bring woe and blight upon
. "Evil communications," too; how these
rupt good manners;" evil associates, evil
undings; the very atmosphere of evil which
s breathing. Little by little may the yield-
e, — the very slightest at first, — as in the
nce of the first draught from the inebriating

cup, or the first throw of the gambler's dice. The tempting power increases as the subject of it yields, the moral power of the tempted one growing stronger by the first and the continued resistance. So that we hear these truthful utterances of heavenly wisdom: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation;" that is, not yielding thereto; "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."[1]

It was into this world of temptation that Christ came; came to give us direction how temptation is to be met and overcome. "He was tempted in all points as we are, and yet without sin."[2] His words express his power. "Get thee behind me, Satan; it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."[3] Foiled in every attempt, the evil assailant has but one course to take; that is, to retreat. And so it is written, "Then the devil leaveth him, and angels came and ministered unto him."[4] This Christ-power, in meeting the world's temptations, is needed by us all. It is a power the grandeur of which shines out in all the noblest of moral heroes our world has ever seen; heroes who adhered to truth and righteousness; whose ruling

[1] James iv. 7. [2] Heb. iv. 15.
[3] Matt. iv. 10. [4] Matt. iv. 11.

ictions were, "We must obey God rather
men;"[1] who realized that this present life
warfare, and that the battle with temptation
ıe which must be experienced by all who
d rise to the dignity and honor of true heav-
sonship in the life which the Father has
ɜrred upon them.

is not that men are tempted that so many
.e hardest of the word's afflictions come. It
cause they fail to resist temptation. It is
want of adherence to the Divine Law that
ɾorkings of sin and wrong are so rife in our
l. Men are seeking to find true life inde-
ent of this law; and death comes in con-
ɜnce,—living death, the sure doom of the
ıgressor. Men must follow, as they think,
ratifications of animal appetite. The tempter
only of their present enjoyment. He never
ɛs of the excess. Immediate pleasure is the
n-word he employs. If the effect be not
ı immediate, the charm may lose its force.
thus the covetous worldling, the surfeiter,
ensualist, the inebriate, are made. Ultimate
ɜquences are kept out of sight. The great
erable law is violated through the deceit-
ss of the tempter with his full promise of

[1] Acts v. 29.

immediate gratification; and the capture is certain. The Bible and human experience are full of these temptings and triumphs of the adversary in the infraction of the physical laws of our being.

It is thus that the soul is led into transgression and the suffering which follows it. Deception is made to appear just now, or only this once, better than honesty, enmity better than conciliation, folly and dissipation than wisdom and soberness; and the irreversible doom comes. Nobody talks much of the advantage or blessing of them in the abstract; but when the tempter has well gilded and tinted them, and holds them at about the right distance for immediate and strong effect upon the eyes of the tempted one, it is then that the allurement becomes effective and the soul is enslaved. And what multitudes of victims thus yield and die; their sighings and moanings, their vows of reformation repeated only to be broken again, their very funeral dirges mingling deeply with the myriad voices constantly arresting, holding, and distressing the ears of the world! And why have they fallen, and why do they thus continue to fall? Not because they loved iniquity for its own sake; not because their consciences at first consented to it; not because

they were not all the time promising themselves, or at least supposing, that should the evil become troublesome they would at once abandon it. Ah, no! The main weakness was behind all this. They had not the conviction of a fresh and strong principle to repel at every onset the attack of the adversary. They had not settled down into the assurance that God must be served, his commandments heeded and complied with, though the force of the world should come in temptation against them. Had they been thus secured, this tempter would long since have left them, and the angels of truth and righteousness have appeared to minister strength to their obedient souls.

In a world like ours, where we have so much of the senseless and hollow, of sham and unproductiveness in actual self-duty and moral advancement, we need truest lights and strongest aids in our moral and spiritual endeavors. How it is needed in the rearing of our youth! A love of the right for its own sake should be the lesson of every parent to the child; a love of duty raised, not by offers of extraneous reward for performing it, but by true and forcible representations of the greatness and glory of duty itself; the Scripture doctrine that "in keeping" the commandments

"there is great reward."[1] For want of this conviction multitudes of youth go out into the world with no strong defences against the power of the tempter. He will penetrate all these expedient motives to righteousness of conduct, and if, underneath, the heart have not soundness of moral principle, his weapons will pierce that through, and effect the work of death.

This is a lesson not for youth only. It is needed at every stage of life. It is for all who are sensible of their accountability to God and to man. All the great interests of our common life suffer more or less from this lack of Christian principle. The most public and private ways of men are infested with the evil. They are not true to their own convictions of right. They fail to do "what conscience dictates should be done." Other considerations step in between them and duty. The mechanic may be persuaded to cheat in his work that he may make the best of a bargain; the merchant to be honest as the most slippery rules of trade will admit; the lawyer to prevaricate and deceive for his client; the preacher to be unfaithful in speech for fear of giving offence; the politician to be a time-server for office and distinction. It is

[1] Ps. xix. 11.

strange how men will wretchedly patch themselves up into all forms of moral uncomeliness and hideousness even, when they might have the fair proportions of the sons of God! It is this mischievous rust which now causes the machinery of human society to creak and clatter as we so often hear it. Let it be set and improved and strengthened by Christian principle, and it will run smoothly, harmoniously, effectively. But until we come to this adaptation of the Christ-power to our moral action, we need not expect to be rid of the adversary of all good. He will be in the midst of us by night and by day, doing his work of destruction.

Temptations, then, will come, as a part of our earthly lot. Yielding to them will be our affliction and shame; overcoming them our joy and true glory. But we must be wakeful, watchful, prayerful, trustful, or we are not proof against the tempter's power. Our weaknesses may be many when we think ourselves strongest. He who was assailed "in all points as we are" has given us the safe direction: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."[1] Every soul has its peculiar temptations. Some are tried in one way and some in another. And the tempta-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 41.

tion often comes at the weakest points, when we may be looking for excuses for yielding to it. The rich have their temptations, the poor theirs; the busy man of the world his; the scholar his: all have some; and he who is our Exemplar will show us how we may pass safely through them all. Out of the fiercest and most terrible, even, which our nature can meet, have our fellow-men been delivered by heeding the directions of Him who vanquished the tempter, as we may vanquish him if we seek the overcoming power and keep in spiritual communion with its Source. He will be our strength and safety whenever in the sharp trial-time of our souls we pray as he has directed us, "Deliver us from evil."

We have no evidence that Jesus was otherwise assailed than by what assails us. But of this we are sure, the reality of the temptation. What if you prove clearly from the scriptures that no such being as a personal devil, distinct from man, exists? Will that save you from the real Satan which is assailing us, passions and lusts that war against the soul, — against all that aspires to the pure and the holy within us? I have seen persons who did and those who did not believe in a personal devil, who were quite devilish themselves. The reality of the evil is what we are to meet and

to deal with. And there is but one way to do that: it is in obedience to God. No Satan ever coming to us can be too strong for that effective and all-conquering word of the Master, if it be uttered in his spirit, "Get thee behind me!" This is the battle we were made to fight, and this is the victory we may secure if our strength and trust be in the heavenly power.

"But deliver us from evil." This is the continuation of the prayer. It expresses a petition uttered since the beginning of our race. It springs from the sense of dependence. It has come from those who knew least, and those who knew most of God; from dullest perceptions of heathens, and from saintliest ones who were enduring evil with the trustful and undaunted spirit that awaited Christian martyrdom. It is the cry ever going up from this human creation to Him who hears, and who will, in his own way and time, beneficently answer it.

It is not a selfish cry, as the Lord's Prayer represents it; but a cry for others as well as for ourselves,—a plea with all our souls for them. And yet it is needful as a personal petition and exercise of the soul. If we would have evil mitigated,—and there is that within us which

tends to supply and perpetuate it,—no duty more imperatively ours, than that we seek to free ourselves of it. If we would extirpate it from the community, clear the world of its affliction, the first contribution toward this good is our own deliverance and purification.

There are physical ills which afflict mankind, from which they naturally desire or pray to be delivered; but which yet abound, despite all human power. With our own race thus beset, Jesus had deepest sympathy. He graciously ministered to those enduring them. Feeding the hungry, healing the sick, opening blind eyes and deaf ears, giving dumbness speech, and raising the dead to life, were among his benefactions. And all those who would give highest proof of their Christian discipleship are expected thus to manifest it, in mitigating as far as possible these earthly needs and sufferings of humanity. Very explicit and comprehensive is that definition of religion given by the apostle James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."[1] Active benevolence, personal piety and purity; this is the whole, all that there need be. It includes

[1] James i. 27.

every virtue and excellence of which our nature here is susceptible.

As far as Christianity in the individual does its work with man, so far will these evils be lightened, lessened, mitigated by love's ministries; so borne by faith's power, as to lift human souls out of their thraldom, and afford them more disciplinary means for the strengthening of human faith and hope and love everywhere.

But the evil from which man most needs deliverance is not that which is material, but that which most demeans and afflicts his spiritual nature. To give Humanity this deliverance, Jesus came. And every strife and experience of the human soul tending to this consummation is constantly requisite wherever our nature is represented. There is no bodily blindness equal to that of the soul's darkness; no poverty of material resources like that of inner spiritual barrenness; no disease of the outer man like that heart-sickness with which the disobedient and sinful are prostrate. Deliverance from the worst of all evils is deliverance from wrong and sin. It was this which Jesus came to effect with man; it is this which man is called upon to seek and by Divine grace to secure. It is escape from this which is ever represented in the idea of Christian salvation, with the individual or the race.

We need wakefulness to this evil. We are not to yield ourselves to its influences, nor to be discouraged in view of its workings, nor to become quietists or anchorites because of its prevalence, and seek to take our places apart from the ground of its operations. If we pray for deliverance from it, we are also bound to work to this end. It is our privilege as well as duty thus to do.

That we regard the whole spirit and intent of this prayer aright, we need the true view of moral evil, and that is the scriptural view, confirmed in all human experience. I refer to the positive nature of wrong, of crime, of sin, wherever committed under the sun. Moral evil is not the mere absence of goodness in God's sight. Good may be wrought out through its working by divine power; but we see not how this can make evil any thing less *than* evil. We cannot make likenesses of differences. Evil is evil, and not good: as pain is pain and not bliss. Wrath, jealousy envy, malice, these seem to be qualities as acti and positive as love, pity, forbearance, sympat That infuriate man, ready to rush with violen upon another, is moved by something more t a mere negation. A positive evil works in and out of him.

The Bible takes a very common-sense vi

this subject. It says: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is a transgression of the law."[1] Sin is an act, as much as an act of love. One violates the law, the other obeys it. "He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."[2] It is difficult to commit nothing. The apostle assures us that "all unrighteousness is sin." And this unrighteousness he defines as "covetousness, maliciousness, deceit, malignity," and a long list of other emotions and actions classified among the active powers or their fruits, by writers on the moral and mental faculties.

Sin is not merely letting alone, doing nothing, thinking nothing, wishing nothing: it is also acting, thinking, wishing wrongly. It is not mere misfortune, mistake, or blunder. It is knowing our duty and doing it not, knowing the wrong and doing it. It is that which God hates, and which we are to regard with a hatred in perfect agreement with a perfect love of all moral excellences.

To fight this good fight of faith aright, we need the soul's entrenchment in God's truth; that assurance ever inspiring us to use our best powers in the contest. "If God be for us, who can

[1] 1 John iii. 4. [2] 1 John iii. 8, 9.

be against us?"[1] Inward, abiding Christian principle: without this, our moral strifes are all doubtful; with it, sure, sooner or later, of success.

There is a lamentable amount of unbelief among men on this subject of the reign and duration of sin; an unbelief which sees it too strong for God's power to overcome, and gives up the greater part of mankind, hopelessly, to the eternal dominion of evil. The Gospel comes "to shed diviner light," to eradicate this error, and so "vindicate the ways of God to man." The fact that our Saviour has given us this prayer is evidence that with him evil, however real and formidable, was no fixed and immovable reality under the Divine administration; but a temporary existence, from which we may look for deliverance, for ourselves and for the whole family of mankind. The very name of Jesus signifies that he is to "take away the sin of the world." He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If we would read the answer to this great cry of the soul for deliverance from moral evil, thus does it stand out before us on the bright page of the Gospel: "For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for

[1] Rom. viii. 31.

the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature (creation) itself shall be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."[1]

Yes, — let us realize it, — the whole mission of Christ signifies the overcoming of all evil with infinite goodness. This is the strife of Almighty Love unto the complete triumph. This also is to be *our* strife unceasingly, if we would be coworkers with him in the grandest, holiest conflict in which men or angels can be engaged!

Other theologies are wanting in their failure to realize that evil is ever to be overcome. In their conceptions, God is not the controlling power in the universe; and that which is most opposite to him must for ever hinder the accomplishment of the complete and perfect work of his holiness! Not so the Gospel of the New Testament. That never regards man as irreclaimable. It accords with all the highest lessons given us in nature; and

"'T is Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,

[1] Rom. viii. 20, 21.

Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good, — a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul to every mode of being
Inseparably linked."

God is sovereign. "He ruleth by his power for ever." He is love, and in his paternal beneficence will do the best and not the worst with his children. Deliverance from evil is in his eternal counsellings! Sin is limited; goodness superabounds; "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."[1]

[1] Rom. v. 21.

## DE PROFUNDIS.

Out of the depths of woe
  To thee, O Lord! I cry;
Darkness surrounds me, but I know
  That thou art ever nigh.

Humbly on thee I wait,
  Confessing all my sin;
Lord! I am knocking at thy gate;
  Open, and take me in!

Like those whose longing eyes
  Watch, till the morning star
(Though late, and seen through tempests) rise,
  Heaven's portals to unbar, —

Like those I watch and pray,
  And, though it tarry long,
Catch the first gleam of welcome day,
  Then burst into a song.

Glory to God above!
  The waters soon will cease;
For, lo! the swift returning dove
  Brings home the sign of peace.

Though storms his face obscure,
  And dangers threaten loud,
Jehovah's covenant is sure,
  His bow is in the cloud!

James Montgomery.

## SECTION VI.

## GOD'S GLORY IN THE COMPLETION OF HIS WORK OF GRACE.

*"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen."*

THIS is the conclusion of our Lord's Prayer. Biblical critics have denied the strict authenticity of it, and in Luke's Gospel it does not appear in the Prayer. But from the earliest Christian time it has been used in connection, and has become so thoroughly identified with it, that the other portion would appear incomplete without it. It is, moreover, a befitting close to the whole petition; a recognition and expressed adoration of that dominion under which all prayer may be offered by man, and answered by Him "of whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things."[1]

"For thine is the kingdom." This is a statement of the Divine Sovereignty. The Creator is Sovereign. His reign is universal. His living energy pervades and directs all, *how*, it is beyond

[1] Rom. xi. 36.

our power to see, as much so as it is to ascertain how *we* live and move and will and accomplish. This is as far as the natural scientist can come. Here he stands and confesses the infinite mystery, "the unknowable," behind, beyond what materialism reveals. Here the believer in the Christian Revelation meets God and accepts him as the upholding and supplying power; adores him who

> "Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

It is to this Source that God's children are directed to come with the assurance that they can find in no other the good which they implore; assured that there is no opposing power which can prevent this communication of the child with the parent; that neither angel nor archangel can have resources ample enough for their wants, and that no resisting force of evil can hinder the blessing which the Infinite Disposer designs to bestow. All Christian theology, and much that does not come under the Christian name, will assent to these affirmations. "Heaven is his throne; the earth is his footstool."[1] "The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations."[2]

[1] Isa. lxvi. 1. [2] Ps. xxii. 28.

It is in the moral or spiritual government of God, however, that we realize his sublimest manifestations. Wonder as we may at the displays of his greatness and majesty and power in the machinery of the vast material universe; revere as we may the wisdom and energy which send out the beams of the morning, and spread the pavilion of night, working through storm and earthquake, through flood and fire; ordering the seasons in their unbroken regularity, and guiding the rolling worlds in their courses through the unmeasured depths; yet in the mysterious dominion of mind, in the realm of the spiritual, the Infinite One makes the display of a mightier power, — mightier to us in its manifestations, as spirit surpasses that which is merely material.

And what is the kingdom of God as revealed to us in his dominion over man? It is that, surely, which applies to the nature of man. God is a spirit, perfect; man a spirit, imperfect. God is the ruler, man the subject. It is the purpose of the Ruler to instruct, discipline, educate the subject, by the rightful exercise of his own powers, and by appointed means by which these powers can be directed and the beneficent end secured. And to this end his moral dispensa-

tions are tending. He is in the world as he has been from the beginning; at work with mankind as past history and the present manifestations of humanity declare. He has been in all the progress of the past; he is still engaged in the furtherance of it; he will never leave the world to the after guidance of its own wisdom and will. As surely as he rules in the material, so surely does he and will he unfold and complete his plans in the whole realm of the spiritual.

His dominion extends equally to the vast and the minute; to the fall of the sparrow as to the revolving constellations of the skies. He cannot govern a part separate from the whole. Events are connected with and dependent upon each other; so that there is a continuous and uninterrupted chain that links the whole in one grand and harmonious system. In this chain,

> "Whatever link you strike,
> Tenth or ten-thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

When, therefore, we consider this dominion in connection with God's moral government, we may rest assured that in the end all will be consummated in accordance with the holy will of the just and gracious Ruler.

The most glorious representation of this moral

government of the Infinite One is given us in the Gospel of Christ. It is in this especially Sent of the Father, Jesus Christ, and in his mission, that the significance of his kingdom is seen. Hebrew prophecy spake concerning him, as it announced the Messiah to come: "And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."[1] Of this kingdom new light is given us when Christ appears. He is indeed its head, its central force, its operative and diffusive light and life.

The Father placed this kingdom in the possession of his Son. Its influences are to reach all, — all who ever did, who do now, who ever will need it. The highest, the lowest, the most learned, the most ignorant: he whose birth ushered him into a home illumined with the hope of the Gospel; he whose soul, while on its earthly mission, continually sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. No eminence so high as to be above its influence; no abasement so deep as not to be reached by its grace! Heaven, earth, and all that are in them; whatsoever statements of

[1] Daniel vii. 14.

speech signify the moral universe, are implied in this dominion which, in its excellency, is perfectly adapted to the spiritual needs of this universe. Such is the kingdom of God in the Gospel dispensation. As in every other sense his kingdom is universal, so is it here. And why a theology that denies this should for a moment find acceptance on the part of enlightened Christians, we are unable to see. The truth is so clear, that "the wayfaring man," it would seem, could not fail to perceive it.

And this, too, is the main ground of confidence and hope for the Christian. It is the Father's grace, not man's impotence. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done or may perform. Sovereign mercy conceived and supervises the work. With this assurance the early heralds of the Cross were encouraged, and with the same assurance have others gone forth unto the present hour, with a wisdom and a will to work for human regeneration. Without this first assurance of this closing section of the Prayer, "For thine is the kingdom," the Christian dispensation would be a doubtful one; with it, we realize that it is "the power of God unto salvation."

And this leads us to speak of the effectual work of this kingdom under the Divine Admin-

istration. "For thine is the kingdom and the power."

No true theist doubts the infinite power of God as displayed in the outward or material creation. The Scriptures are full of this conception and affirmation. "Power belongeth unto God; He ruleth by his power for ever."[1] No believer in this power can for a moment suppose that one of the myriad worlds running their vast rounds in the fields of space could break from the grasp that holds and the force that bears it on in its perfect revolution, and wander guideless into new and unappointed ways. Our astronomy teaches us better. Not even the comet's most eccentric track has ever hinted a doubt of the all-directing hand. "Thus, and not otherwise; within these bounds, and not beyond them," is the authoritative and prevailing edict.

Even so do we conceive of this same power in its operations in the moral or spiritual realm. It has manifested itself wherever truth and error, the right and the wrong, have confronted each other. It makes the stripling David the giant's conqueror; it converts the rebellious Saul of Tarsus, and impels him to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"[2] It causes Agrippa to

[1] Ps. lxii. 11; lxvi. 7. [2] Acts ix. 6.

exclaim, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"[1] and Felix to tremble before his defenceless Christian prisoner. This same power working for our human nature, in the fulfilment of its divine purposes, has "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,"[2] delivered from the sword, brought light out of darkness, strength out of weakness, and made feeble man a conqueror and more than conqueror of the most formidable obstacles that lay in the way of his spiritual progress and salvation.

"Thine is the power," and what but an infinite power, to whose limits there are no bounds? The subjects of earthly kings may rebel, and there may not be power enough in the government to subdue the rebellious; and thus the kingdom may be overthrown. These are imperfections to which all earthly sovereigns are subject. But with God this is impossible. His is the kingdom, his the ruling and subduing power. To talk of human or of any other agency in opposition to this power is to speak of an unequal contest. When God speaks or acts with the intent to have his wise and holy designs accomplished, his word and his will are obeyed.

[1] Acts xxvi. 28. [2] Heb. xi. 33, 34.

Says Mrs. Stowe, in her "Sunny Memories," "Calvinism, in its essential features, will never cease from the earth, because the great fundamental facts of nature are Calvinistic, and men with strong minds and wills always discover it. The predestination of a sovereign will is written over all things. The old Greek tragedies read it and expressed it. So did Mohammed, Napoleon, Cromwell. Why? They found it so by their own experience; they tried the forces of nature enough to find their strength. The strong swimmer who breasts the Rhine is certain of its current. But Ranke well said that in those days when the whole earth was in arms against these reformers, they had no refuge but in exalting God's sovereignty above all other causes. To him who strives with the giant forces of evil, what calm in the thought of an overpowering will, so that will be crowned with goodness! However grim to the distrusting looks this fortress of sovereignty in times of flowery ease, yet in times when the waters roar and are troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, it has always been the refuge of God's people."

This is essentially true. The pity is, that the spiritual truth in Calvinism could not be dissociated from its stern and arbitrary features,

and seen more perfectly in connection with the good Lord's gentle influences and the proper freedom of man.

This revelation is made in the plain New Testament Gospel. CHRIST is the embodiment of the effectual saving power of God with man. His office, character, mission, as herein manifested, all declare it. Christ affirms of himself, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth."[1] "As thou hast given him power over all flesh."[2] He is called by an apostle "the Son of God with power."[3] By this power, he rules and reigns; by this, he has triumphed in the past, and triumphs now, and will extend his conquests, until all that exalts itself against the heavenly interests shall be brought low, the crooked be made straight and the rough places plain, and all souls be blest with God's salvation.

The Gospel is a continuous manifestation of Divine power. It entered the world with this manifestation. The wonderful works of Jesus and his apostles affirm it. Those beholding them "glorified God, who had given such power unto men."[4] And since their days has this same ministration in some way blest our world. It is

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18. [2] John xvii. 2.
[3] Rom. i. 4. [4] Matt. ix. 8.

*in* the world still. It deals with the hearts of men; convicts of sin, subdues evil passions, works repentance, brings in, amid the world's turbulence and sin, "peace like a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea."[1] We are too apt to overlook these visible tokens of God's power in man. Many who are almost inclined to doubt the old miracles of Christianity ought to be better convinced of the reality of the new. Many more who are yet looking for some yet future and far-distant evidences of the saving grace of the Almighty are almost blind to the hopeful and cheering evidences interwoven with human experience at the present time.

As far as the world is yet from what Christianity promises it shall be, we have no reason to doubt the salvation of the most hardened offender. In the churches and out of them, we may find cheering illustrations of this saving grace of the Eternal. Our temperance reforms of those enslaved to habits of inebriation, our prison-discipline efforts and accomplishments, our asylums for the fallen and offender, our pleas and convictions and progress in respect to human bondage and the right of freedom to the race; our protests against the wars of nations,

[1] Isa. xlviii. 18.

and attempts to adjust the difficulties between them by peaceful arbitration rather than a brutal resort to arms, — are all indications of the working of this moral force of the Almighty. The best and purest works in all the Christian churches are pointing, too, in this direction. God works by various means and through human instrumentalities, as it may please him; and his work is sure.

Pity it is that our faith is so feeble, our vision so dim! Christians everywhere doubt too much. They talk, sing, write, pray, and preach of moral and spiritual reform more than they strive heartily in Christ's spirit to work it out. They have not faith enough in God nor in man. This is one reason why so many reject the great evidences of our holy Gospel, and this is the reason also why so many who profess it have only gone over the threshold of its spiritual temple. They are merely in, and that seems to suffice them. They too often stand in the vestibule and look out upon others, instead of going farther in to survey the strength and glory of the edifice and receive heavenly instruction and baptism of its Great High Priest.

We are to understand, then, that what has been accomplished by God's spiritual power with

man may be and will be again, unto the triumphant end of the Redeemer's dispensation.

And what, yet more definitely speaking, is this power? That of Divine Love, assuredly; that of human love, also, divinely directed; love that gives an inspiration higher than that of the earthly, — the assurance of a destiny full of the spiritual and immortal. The central force of Christ's kingdom is love, God's own essence, the strongest power in the universe, and, as we mortals view it from our stand-point, eventually, — for the grand work is yet in its early stages, — the overcoming power. Subjugation to its reign; acceptance of its service; everlasting joy in its dominion! This is God's power in Christ, the Son, in the perfecting of his work of saving grace. HIS POWER ADEQUATE TO HIS LOVE, what can it not, what will it not do? THIS IS THE VITAL QUESTION OF ALL THEOLOGY INVOLVING the extent OF HUMAN SALVATION. We can see but one answer to it in the light of the Christian revelation. The Infinite Power must accomplish the will of the Infinite Love. Hallelujah, that *thus* "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

"And the *glory*, for ever." The glory, too, is God's in this work of his saving grace.

An earthly sovereign may have full power to

administer his government and defend it from all enemies, and yet so abuse that power as to render his reign inglorious. Many rulers have thus done. Nero and Caligula were such. Empire and power were theirs; but their names are coupled with infamy. Had their power been righteously employed, glory might have been theirs also. But when before heaven and in the face of humanity they played the sanguinary part of the tyrant, their glory departed, and they have received the richly merited execration of the world.

No such imputations can ever rest on the great and blessed God of all. Kingdom, power, glory, all are his. Thus the chain is complete. He has the right to rule. He has the power to carry that right into execution, and will so exercise it as to preserve in unsullied purity that glory which surrounded him when he surveyed the new creation, and in his holy wisdom pronounced it "very good." Therefore the tribute of the Revelator, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."[1]

God's glory is manifested in man: in man's endowments and capabilities; and these are in accordance with his spiritual origin. He is a

[1] Rev. iv. 11.

child of God. This places him above the material creation, makes him "a little lower than the angels, and crowns him with glory and honor."[1] What of the glory of the Creator there is in the material creation is seen to be so here on earth through man's capacity for realizing and appreciating it. As a popular scientist has well expressed it: "His voice praises, his intelligence understands, his heart feels and loves. The wisdom, goodness, and power of Him who dwells in light, and is the fountain of Immortality, and whose absence is the darkness of the spirit, stand before him confessed and unveiled."

It is the glory of God in man that the mission of Christ reveals; the approximation of man to the wonderful Author of his being. This is our highest conception of God's glory in the present state; our capability of being like our Father. The first question and answer of the old Westminster Catechism speak the truth; "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him for ever." God is most highly glorified in the obedience and love of his children. He can never be completely glorified in the mission of his Son, but in the highest and most extensive good which this mission can effect. If it has the

[1] Ps. viii. 5.

salvation of every soul as its object, then this object is effected in nothing short of the blessing of all souls in the knowledge of God and willing subjection to his service. If the conversion of one soul is so much to the glory of God, the conversion of two or two millions is so much additional glory. To make the glory most complete, all souls must be included in the work of redemption.

Thus sang the Psalmist: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name."[1] Thus prayed Jesus; "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."[2] Thus wrote Paul: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[3] Confession — not wrung from subdued though unreconciled subjects, but from willing, obedient, and adoring children. It

[1] Ps. lxxxvi. 9. [2] John xvii. 1, 2. [3] Phil. ii. 9–11.

is the confession coming of RECONCILIATION: note this. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."[1] Confession, obedience, and love of all the subdued and reconciled ones.

We may draw one of the strongest and most salutary practical inferences from the teachings of these closing words of the Lord's Prayer. As God's glory is most essentially promoted by our knowledge of his character and ways, and obedience to his requirements, it is our privilege to seek thus to glorify him in the life now enjoyed. To us have been given the most extensive manifestations of his goodness. If we have rightly learned our first lessons in the Christian faith, we must understand that his kingdom and power are with us; the kingdom of truth, the work and rule of righteousness and love. Shall the exercise of these benign influences in our own souls, and through our fidelity to other souls, glorify our Father in heaven? He thus calls us. It is our duty, as it will be our blessing, to answer.

It is one thing — let us realize it, reader — for

[1] Col. i. 19, 20.

us to hear of that kingdom which is to carry its conquests and rule by its omnipotence from the rising to the setting sun, and subject all souls to its holy influences; to say that we have confidence in its strength and durability; to repeat in our prayers and songs and responses that significant language of the Saviour: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." It is, indeed, another thing to realize that this kingdom is within, exerting its power in our own hearts, and giving out the blessings of its spirit in all the actions of our lives. This will be with us the beginning of that glory which our whole race, freed from its darkness, cleansed from its corruptions, disciplined through its sufferings, and redeemed from all its pollutions, shall, as God is true, be brought to realize, by the effectual working of his Omnipotent Love. Be his blessing upon us, through Christ his Son. Amen.

## TRUST IN THE INFINITE DISPOSER.

God everywhere hath way,
And all things serve his might;
His every act pure blessing is,
His paths unsullied light.
When he makes bare his arm,
What shall his work withstand?
When he his people's cause defends,
Who, who shall stay his hand?

Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
With wonder filled, thou then shalt own
How wise, how strong his hand.
Thou comprehend'st him not;
Yet earth and heaven tell,
God sits as sovereign on the throne —
He ruleth all things well.

Thou seest our weakness, Lord!
Our hearts are known to thee;
Oh, lift thou up the sinking head,
Confirm the feeble knee!
Let us in life and death,
Boldly thy truth declare,
And publish with our latest breath
Thy love and guardian care.

GERHARDT.

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